

Local Government SERVICE

**PUBLICITY
FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT**

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THREEPENCE

JOINT REFERENCE

A VICTORY CONFERENCE

ALTHOUGH it meets still under the shadow of wartime restrictions, with fewer delegates, limited accommodation, and a reduced programme of social activities, this month's NALGO Conference should prove a real victory gathering. Never has the Association had before it so constructive and forward-looking an agenda, and the three full days set aside for it seem likely to be barely sufficient for full consideration of the 208 items.

As is fitting in this momentous year, the interests and future of the 40,000 or more local government officers who are now beginning to return from the Forces take pride of place. Successive notices of motion propose to free them from all further payment of subscriptions for the remainder of their war service, to make up to them the lost opportunities of promotion, to provide them with full opportunities for re-education and such additional training as they may need, and to extend all these facilities to those who have been transferred to war industry as well as the fighting services. In fact, should the aims of branches be achieved—aims which, we are sure, the National Executive Council wholeheartedly endorses—then, so far from being prejudiced by their war service, our warriors and war workers will be able to return to a career in local government offering brighter prospects than those to which they looked forward in 1939. This is as it should be.

Best Brains Needed

But Conference clearly intends to go far beyond that. It has always been a major part of NALGO's programme that the local government service should offer a career and a vocation to every entrant willing to obtain the technical knowledge and to acquire the administrative ability that are necessary, and the achievement of that objective is now in sight. As we have repeatedly emphasised, the tasks facing local government in the years ahead will call for the best brains and highest abilities the nation can provide, and it is the duty of both the service and of the local authorities to meet that need. The Conference agenda shows that NALGO will play its part.

In addition to the emphasis, in a number of notices of motion, for greatly expanded facilities for education and training, we have the interesting proposals for interchange of views and information with the local administrators of other nations, including the provision of travelling scholarships and exchanges of visits, and for the establishment of municipal staff colleges. With these should be linked the plans outlined in the annual report for a public relations policy designed to foster a constructive partnership between the service, the local authorities, and the citizens. NALGO is certainly ready to offer an ample quo for its quid.

Not that the quid is forgotten. Education alone will not provide the highly skilled local government service of the future; if you want

the best brains, you must pay for them—and on this "bread and butter" aspect, Conference has many constructive proposals to offer. The basic need is stressed in Abertillery's call for an adequate national scale of salaries, binding upon all local authorities—a call which, if approved, as we are certain it will be, should strengthen the hands of the Association's

they accelerate or delay the achievement of its aims? Those are the tests.

On subscriptions, we can see but one answer. It is true, of course, that the strength of a trade union resides in its members, not in its wealth; but you cannot carry on efficient trade union work, particularly on the scale demanded by NALGO members, without money. The Association needs many more organisers, a greatly increased Headquarters and district office staff, more extensive educational and public relations work, more research, a bigger and better journal. With every month that passes the demands for its advice and assistance on service, legal, educational, and public relations matters increase, without any corresponding increase in staff qualified to give that advice and assistance. For years, NALGO members have had their trade unionism on the cheap. The Association has yielded substantial dividends—there is not a member in the country who, in hard cash alone, has not had his subscription repaid many times over in higher salaries, better grading, war bonus, legal protection, not to mention many benefits incapable of monetary assessment. We have reached the stage today when a bigger investment will yield still bigger returns. NALGO members commonly deplore the short-sightedness of local authorities which will forgo or whittle down a service of real communal value lest it call for another penny on the rates; let them beware lest they fall into the same error themselves.

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Next month's journal, to be published about the middle of July, will be an enlarged number devoted to the report of Conference, and it is hoped to supply a copy to every member. To provide the extra paper for this, the August journal will not be published; normal monthly publication will be resumed on September 1.

negotiators in the National Whitley Council. A firm lead from Conference, combined with the clear recognition given in the agenda that the claim is based upon a guarantee of still more efficient service, should help to persuade that body to a progressive outlook. Allied with this call for better salaries are the plans for the re-employment of displaced social welfare officers, for improvements in the pensions scheme, for a more adequate cost-of-living bonus, and for proper compensation of all officers adversely affected by legislative changes. The claims here are all well-founded and their satisfaction is essential, not only in common justice, but to ensure the provision of a service of the quality demanded by the needs of today.

Tools for the Job

But need, however great, and justice, however invoked, will not alone secure for the service what it seeks. To reach our goal we must have an Association that is strong, united, well-organised, well-led, and able to demand proper consideration for its claims. That can be secured only with the support of members, branches, and districts.

It is in this light that delegates should approach the three most controversial items on the agenda—subscriptions, affiliation to the T.U.C., and the extent to which Conference should abrogate its control of policy to a referendum of members.

Will adoption or rejection of these proposals strengthen or weaken the Association? Will

Far-sighted View

Upon the other issues, of affiliation and the ballot, opinion is strongly divided and it would be improper for this journal, which strives to speak for the Association as a whole, to express a view on one side or the other. The case for and against affiliation has been argued ably and at length over the past three years; that on the ballot has been less widely discussed, but will no doubt be fully debated at Blackpool. We would content ourselves with urging all concerned in the decision, whether as speakers or as voters, to take the far-sighted view and to put the interests of the Association, long-term as well as short, before their personal predilections, whatever those may be. If that principle is followed in dealing with every item in the agenda, indeed, than NALGO's Victory Conference of 1945 may well go down in the Association's history as the most constructive it has ever known—the opening of a new era of usefulness to members, to the local government service, and to the nation.

It is the aim of "Local Government Service" to encourage the fullest freedom of opinion and expression with the Association. Unless the fact is expressly stated, therefore, views put forward in the journal—whether in the editorial columns or in signed articles—should not necessarily be regarded as expressing the considered policy of the Association.

viding the citizens with a complete, simple, and accurate picture of the authority's activities;

(ii) through contacts with newspapers, organisations, and individual citizens, and by special inquiries and opinion surveys, to keep his finger constantly on the pulse of public opinion, reporting to the local authority which of its activities were acceptable to the public, which appeared to require modification to make them acceptable, and in respect of which more explanation and information were needed; and

(iii) to do all in his power to develop a lively and enlightened spirit of co-operation and mutual understanding between the local authority, its staff, and the citizens.

The arrangements outlined above would, of course, be necessary only in the case of a big local authority, serving a substantial population and possessing a wide range of services. Nevertheless, although it would be impracticable for a small authority to employ a full-time public relations officer, we consider that a progressive public relations policy is essential to every type of local authority, and that all should accept the principle, and should carry it out to the full extent of local needs and opportunities.

MACHINERY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Many Methods Available

The methods by which the public relations policy is to be carried out will naturally vary with the different types of local authority, the services they provide, and the communities they serve. Some of the most important of these methods are outlined below. The list is not, however, to be regarded as exhaustive, and we consider that an enterprising public relations committee and public relations officer should be able to adapt and expand the methods suggested in the light of local circumstances and opportunities.

I. Personal Contacts

Personal contacts between the members and officers of the local authority and the citizens they serve will always remain the most important single vehicle of public relations. On the one hand, the citizen who, on a visit to the Town Hall, or from a member of the authority's staff, derives an impression of discourtesy, inefficiency, or indifference to his welfare and problems, will form a prejudice against the authority which no amount of publicity, however good, is likely to remove. On the other hand, the citizen who, in his contacts with the authority, is treated with courtesy, efficiency, and helpful interest in his welfare and problems, will become an active collaborator, ready to convince others of the value of the authority's work. For these reasons, as well as in the interests of general efficiency, it should be an important part of the work of the public relations officer to conduct periodic checks of all the authority's contacts with the public, to hold regular discussions with the staffs of the various departments on problems of public contact, and where desirable to organise courses and lectures for officers on the attitude they should adopt towards the public. In this connection it should be remembered that the best "public relations officer" a local authority can have is the individual employee who comes into daily contact with the citizen. It is by his efficiency, his courtesy, and the degree to which he recognises and feels enthusiasm for the dignity and importance of his position as a public servant that the authority will be judged. For this reason it would be of benefit to the authority to ensure that each of its employees knew something of the working and policies of

the authority as a whole, as well as of the particular department in which he was employed, and to do all in its power to develop in its staff an understanding of, and pride in, their work.

II. The School

The child is the citizen of the future and it is therefore essential that any programme designed to expand interest in citizenship should begin in the school.

In recent years, much has been done, especially in the reorganised senior schools, to introduce positive education in citizenship into the

and hygiene should take their place in the study of biology; while classes in chemistry might well include reference to the chemical problems of gas production and sewage disposal, and classes in physics to waste supply.

Some schools, also, endeavour, through the activities of school councils, committees, parliaments, and similar groups, to give practical training in debating, self-expression and committee procedure. Work of this kind which may be continued after leaving school in youth clubs and voluntary organisations provides invaluable experience in public service and is deserving of the fullest encouragement. It might with advantage be more closely linked with the work of the local authority, through the formation of Junior Councils debating matters of current civic interest, civic clubs attached to community centres, and organised visits to local authority meetings and undertakings.

One of the first tasks of the Local Government Public Relations Council, the creation of which is suggested later in this Report, should be to call a conference of educational authorities and teachers to review the whole question of the teaching of citizenship, and to consider how it can best be developed. In this connection we would stress the desirability of giving citizenship—both in broad abstract outline and in practical detail—a prominent place in the curriculum of the continuation school when the school-leaving age is raised to 16.

We can conceive of no better use to which these additional years of education could be put than the development in the nation's youth of a keen and informed interest in the machinery, privileges, duties, and opportunities of their citizenship, while the benefits likely to accrue to the nation from the emergence of a generation of citizens ready to play an active part in its communal life would be incalculable.

III. Youth Service

Nor should education in citizenship end with the years of school. Already, many youth organisations—churches, boys' and girls' clubs, Scouts and Guides, and similar bodies—devote much attention to it. There is scope for considerable extension of this training, particularly on practical and imaginative lines calculated to appeal to the idealism and spirit of service of adolescent youth.

The war has provided many examples of the eagerness and ability of children and young people to engage in public service of many kinds. The enthusiasm and devotion aroused in this way should not be allowed to fade after the war, but should rather be encouraged and developed. Young people, both as individuals and through their various organisations, might be recruited into Civic Service Squads to each of which might be given one or more definite projects, such as the collection of salvage, the campaign against litter, safety on the roads, the building and equipment of community centres and playing-fields, life-guard service at bathing places, the management of gardens and allotments, assistance at nursery schools and health centres, local historical, geological, botanical and biological surveys, the clearing and restoration of derelict land, co-operation with schools and museums in the collection and preparation of exhibits, the organisation of pageants, etc. By this means the spirit of service would be encouraged and the desire to continue such service into adult life would be implanted.

IV. Adult Service

It is important that this desire, once aroused, should not be allowed to fade for lack of opportunity to give effect to it, and the local authority should do all in its power to foster

THE COMMITTEE

The NALGO Reconstruction Committee, which prepared this report, is an independent committee appointed by the National Executive Council. Its members are:

- J. H. Warren, M.A., D.P.A., Town Clerk, Slough (Chairman);
 - S. Lord, F.I.M.T.A., F.S.A.A., lately Borough Treasurer, Acton; past President of the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants, and of the Association of Local Government Financial Officers (vice-Chairman);
 - D. Brooks, Town Clerk, Richmond, Yorks;
 - T. S. Griffin, A.M.Inst.C.E., Waterworks Engineer and Manager, Leicester;
 - F. H. Harrod, M.C., B.A., Director of Education, Coventry;
 - J. D. Imrie, M.A., B.Com., City Chamberlain, Edinburgh;
 - G. Llewellyn, Chief Clerk, County Accountants' Department, Monmouthshire;
 - W. G. Marks, M.Inst.T.A., General Manager of Passenger Transport, Liverpool;
 - H. W. Millen, F.I.M.T.A., Treasurer, Haltemprice Urban District Council;
 - Sir Parker Morris, LL.B., Town Clerk, Westminster;
 - C. J. Newman, O.B.E., Town Clerk, Exeter;
 - A. Denton Ogden, M.B.E., F.R.San.I., Chief Sanitary Inspector, Chelmsford Rural District Council;
 - F. W. Purse, M.I.E.E., M.I.Mech.E., Chief Engineer, London and Home Counties Joint Electricity Authority;
 - E. L. Riley, Superintendent of Lettings, Housing Dept., Liverpool;
 - G. J. Sherriff, Clerk, Stirling County Council;
 - J. Simonds, M.A., Barrister-at-Law, General Secretary, National Association of Local Government Officers;
 - Dr. A. Wotherspoon, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., Medical Officer of Health, Stoke-on-Trent;
 - L. C. St. Leger Yeend, A.C.I.S., A.L.A.A., Clerk, Sodbury Rural District Council;
 - Secretary to the Committee—A. Spoor, Public Relations Officer, NALGO;
 - Research Assistant—Miss E. D. Idle.
- Two members of the Committee, Mr. A. R. Fearnley, lately Transport Manager, Sheffield, and a past President of the Municipal Passenger Transport Association, and Mr. E. Ridley, O.B.E., LL.B., Director of Public Assistance, Middlesex C.C., died before the report was completed. Both had rendered valuable service in its preparation.

curriculum, either by the holding of special classes and courses on "civics" or by introducing problems of national and local government into the teaching of such subjects as history, geography, and current affairs. There is, we are convinced, scope for a wide extension of this work.

Every child is naturally interested in its own neighbourhood and in the evidences of communal activity which surround it—the collection of refuse, the work of the policeman, the visits of district nurse, rent collector, and meter reader, the gas and water pipes, the drains, the streets, buses, trams, parks and playgrounds. Satisfaction and development of its curiosity about these things affords, we suggest, the best introduction to a study of the wider world outside.

Moreover, we can see no reason why practical citizenship should not take its place in the curriculum as an essential part of nearly every subject already there. Local history and the history of civic institutions afford a natural starting point for the study of national and world history; mathematics would be given a more personal significance were it to be linked with the mathematical problems of housing, roadmaking, gas and electricity supply, and rating; public health

all its citizens an eagerness to co-operate service of the community. The various time civil defence organisations—wardens, guards, W.V.S., Housewives' Service, and like—provide an admirable nucleus for work of this kind which is capable of considerable adaptation and expansion in time of peace and should not be allowed to integrate.

Community centres, health centres, the care of children and the aged, the manufacture of toys and equipment for schools and hospitals, and many similar activities, might be used to keep alive the spirit of co-operative community service which the war has aroused to such high degree, and of which local authorities should avail themselves in every possible way. By contrast with the present practice of many of them of making local government almost an esoteric rite, to be performed in secret and by the initiated only, they should do all in their power to bring the citizen into partnership with them, consulting him, heeding his views, and giving him a positive and constructive job to do.

In particular, it should be a part of the duties of the public relations officer to encourage, where necessary, to organise frequent meetings of citizens at which matters of interest to the community as a whole might be considered. Such meetings should be attended by members of the local authority, who should do them not only to inform the citizens of what the authority is doing, but also to seek the views of the citizens on what they want it to do. It should be the object of the local authority, in this and in other ways, to bring the individual citizen into active partnership with it, and to convince him that local government is his business, largely dependent for success upon the degree of interest he takes in it and the amount of support he accords it.

The Press

The Press is to-day, and is likely long to remain, the most important means of contact between the local authority and the community it serves. For this reason, the maintenance of a healthy relationship between the local authority and the newspapers—and particularly, of course, the local newspapers—is of great importance.

To-day, however, for a number of reasons, the newspaper is a less effective means of contact than it was in the past, or than it might be. Many newspaper editors complain of a growing tendency among local authorities to resent and avoid publicity for their work. These local authorities, they allege, conduct the greater part of their work in committee, from which the Press is excluded, and use the public meeting of the full council merely as a "rubber stamp" assembly for the confirmation of business conducted behind closed doors. They complain, further, that some local authorities make it difficult, if not impossible, for newspaper representatives to obtain full and accurate information about their work, refusing them access to committee minutes before the council meetings, forbidding their officers to give information, and declining themselves to make any public statements.

Local authorities and local government officers, for their part, while readily admitting that the Press, as a whole, deals fairly and accurately with local government, complain that some newspapers adopt an unfairly hostile attitude towards them, going out of their way to criticise even when criticism is unmerited, and persistently denigrating everything the elected representatives say or do, because these show a disposition—as they should—to follow their own judgment and not to take their cue from the newspapers. They complain, further, that reports of council meetings are sometimes distorted, that reports of municipal activities are sometimes inaccurate and mis-

leading, that interviews occasionally distort and embroider the information given, that comment is sometimes misinformed and that, in general, newspapers of this type appear to regard local government primarily as a source of "scandals" and "sensations" and to look upon a local authority and its staff as "fair game" for attack.

There is, we are concerned, some justification for all these complaints.

Full Publicity Essential

We consider it of urgent importance that the relations between local government and the Press should be improved. We believe that, on the one hand, it is essential to the health of democratic local government that its affairs should be conducted, as far as the public interest permits, with the fullest possible publicity, and that local authorities should give every facility to the Press to report and comment on their proceedings; and that, on the other hand, the Press itself should treat local government in a responsible spirit, clearly, truthfully, objectively, and critically. Local authorities have no right to resent or to seek to evade criticism, but they have the right to demand that criticism shall be honest and based upon adequate knowledge.

In order to secure this full and fair reporting and criticism, we suggest that it should be one of the primary functions of the proposed public relations committee (to which, as we have already recommended, the editors of local newspapers might usefully be co-opted) to examine the relations between the local authority and the Press, and to do all it can to improve those relations and to put them on a basis of mutual confidence.

We have discussed this matter with representatives of the Newspaper Society, the National Union of Journalists, and the Institute of Journalists—to whose ready co-operation and earnest desire to contribute to an improvement of existing relations we wish to pay tribute—and we found ourselves in substantial agreement with them both upon the reasons for the present unsatisfactory position and upon the remedies for which it calls.

Excessive Secrecy

Normally, the Press obtains information about local authority activities in three ways:

- (i) From the minutes and reports of committee meetings;
- (ii) From meetings of the full council; and
- (iii) From statements made by and interviews with members and officers of a local authority.

There is, however, a wide variation in the manner in which local authorities supply this information or give facilities to Press representatives to obtain it.

Some local authorities admit the Press to meetings of all or most of their committees, allow it to report committee proceedings fully, supply it with copies of minutes, reports, agendas, etc., conduct the whole of their council business in public, and permit their members and officers to answer questions by and make statements to Press representatives. In the areas of such authorities local government activities are fully reported and commented upon. At the other end of the scale, some local authorities exclude the Press from all committee meetings, conduct much of the business of the full council in committee from which the Press is similarly excluded, refuse to supply the Press with agendas, minutes and reports, and forbid their members and officers to answer questions or make statements to the Press. In the areas of such authorities local government activity cannot be fully and accurately reported. There are many variations of practice between these two extremes.

Believing, as we do, that full publicity is essential to the health of democratic local government, and that local authorities should treat the Press as a partner in their work, we strongly deprecate the excessive secrecy practised by some of the authorities mentioned in the preceding paragraph. In particular do we deprecate the following practices, all of which, in our view, are contrary to the spirit if not always to the letter of the Local Authorities (Admission of the Press to Meetings) Act, 1908, and inimical to the public interest and the best interests of local authorities themselves:

- (i) A council refusing to supply the Press with minutes, reports, etc., in advance of the meeting of the council at which they will be considered;
- (ii) A council dealing with a substantial portion of its business in regular meetings as a committee of the whole council, from which the Press is excluded;
- (iii) A council going into committee on occasions when the public interest does not call for secret debate;
- (iv) A council including in its agenda some such item as "The Council in Committee" under which are raised, in the absence of the Press, matters in respect of which notice has not previously been given.

The practice referred to in (iv) above is forbidden to county and borough councils by the Local Government Act, 1933. . . . There is no such provision in the code governing urban and rural district councils and it would thus appear to be possible for business to be transacted at their meetings which had not been specified on the agenda, and to be taken in committee by virtue of a resolution passed under the Act of 1908 for the exclusion of the Press. We have no evidence that such a practice is widespread, but representatives of the Press have assured us that instances of it have occurred in their experience.

We recommend that the law be amended to bring urban and rural district councils under the same code as counties and boroughs in this respect.

Admission to Committees

Whether Press representatives should normally be admitted to meetings of committees of a local authority is a matter upon which the representatives of the Press are themselves divided. The evidence submitted to us suggests that in the few towns where this system is practised it works well, securing full and frequent reports of the work of the local authority and, in consequence, a high level of public interest. On the other hand, we cannot but feel that, as a general rule, the presence of the Press at committee meetings is likely to hamper that free and frank discussion which is an essential feature of committee work, and thus to be contrary to the public interest. Moreover, we doubt whether representatives of the Press themselves would generally wish to attend committee meetings were they invited to do so, provided they were supplied afterwards with adequate reports of the business discussed and the decisions reached. We therefore make no recommendation on this point.

We do, however, feel that the present methods of informing the Press of local authority activities are capable of substantial improvement, and we therefore recommend that all local authorities should consider remodelling their arrangements in accordance with the following principles:

- (i) **General Policy**—A local authority should regard it as a basic principle of democratic government, and as a duty to the electors from whom it derives its being and authority, that all public business should be fully reported to the public and should be debated in public, save only when such public reporting and discussion

would be contrary to the public interest. Examples of matters in respect of which, in our view, secrecy is justified are:—

(a) Matters which are the subject of litigation;

(b) Matters which may subsequently become the subject of litigation;

(c) Matters affecting the interests of third parties; and

(d) Matters about which the publication of details in the early stages might prejudice the full development of a scheme.

Such matters might appropriately be specified in a standing order prescribing the circumstances in which a local authority should normally go into committee.

Public Discussion of Officers

Under the heading (c) we would include all debates, reports, and other information respecting the salaries, increments, and promotions of officers of a local authority. While we agree that the public has a right to know what salaries are being paid to its public servants (and would, in any event, have an opportunity of knowing, since the salary offered is normally stated when appointments are advertised) we cannot agree that the public interest is served by newspaper reports of public debates on the salaries and personal or professional merits of named individuals. On this point we agree with the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Local Government which states (p. 148):

"It is clear that the publicity given to invidious discussions of personalities may have very detrimental effects upon the service, and it would be desirable for local authorities to consider by what procedure this might be minimised."

This recommendation was endorsed by the Minister of Health in his annual report for 1929-30 (pp. 135-6) when, after bringing it to the attention of local authorities, he added:

"The work of local authorities, whether regarded from the point of view of money or from that of the well-being of the community, is now so important as to make it increasingly necessary to attract to it the ablest men. This will not be achieved if there is public debate on the salaries to be paid to particular officers. No one likes to have the question of his remuneration bandied about in public debate, and men who should be drawn into the service may refrain from entering it if they are to be subject to this disability. The Minister therefore urges every local authority to follow the recommendation of the Royal Commission, which they can do without in the slightest degree relaxing control."

Disclosure of Minutes Urged

(ii) *Committee Minutes*—While, as is stated above, we do not consider that it is either necessary or generally desirable for the Press to attend meetings of local authority committees, we regard it as important that the fullest reports of committees should be made available to the Press.

We can see no justification for either withholding minutes or for imposing any embargo upon publication of or comment upon them before they are considered by the council. We agree with the arguments put to us with emphasis by the newspaper interests with whom we discussed this question at length, that democratic local government cannot work successfully so long as it denies to the electors an opportunity of expressing their opinions upon the policies proposed by a local authority.

For these reasons, therefore, we recommend that all minutes and reports of committees should be made available to the Press at the same time as they are made available to members of the local authority, and that both Press and public should be free to comment upon them.

There will, of course, be some items in the

reports of committees the publication of which would be contrary to public interest. In respect of such items we believe that a suggestion from the town clerk or other responsible officer that they should not be reported would be generally respected by the Press; alternatively, such items could be specifically marked "not for publication or comment." Newspapers can normally be trusted scrupulously to observe such directions when the reason for them is sound; and in the unlikely event of any breach of confidence the local authority is always in a position to apply the powerful sanction of withdrawing reports and facilities from an offender.

It will also be recognised that the law of libel must set some limits to the details which may be embodied in minutes which are to be published and supplied to the Press, and that legal considerations may in certain cases require a guarded wording incompatible with the full statement of the council's business recommended above. Since we do not believe that there will be any general desire substantially to modify the law of defamation in favour of local authorities, instances of this kind will continue to arise. We consider, however, that the reasons for any restrictions imposed on the full disclosure of detail in minutes on these grounds will be understood and appreciated by the Press.

We do, however, consider it grossly unfair to the local authorities that they should be left in the doubt they at present feel—and which accounts very largely for their unwillingness to supply copies of minutes to the Press—as to whether such issue may amount to "excessive publication" destroying the qualified privilege at present attaching, in certain conditions, to statements or minutes circulated to members of a council.

We recommend, therefore, that the law be amended to provide that this qualified privilege shall not be impaired by the circulation of statements or minutes through the normal channels of publicity.

More Information Needed

(iii) *Committee Reports*—Minutes alone, however, are frequently an inadequate means of conveying information to the Press. They are normally phrased in accordance with legal and administrative requirements designed to make them, when approved, instructions to the local authority's staff and for this reason are often, as they stand, of little value as explanations of the committee's decisions. Press representatives to whom formal minutes only are supplied are thereby severely handicapped and may find themselves unable, through lack of detailed information and background knowledge to report matters as fully and clearly as they would wish. To overcome these difficulties we suggest:

(a) That, as far as practicable and subject to any overriding legal requirements, minutes be phrased with the Press and the public in mind, in such a form as to make both the matter under review and the decision of the committee upon it clear to the citizen without detailed knowledge of the committee's work;

(b) That, after minutes have been supplied to the Press, some member or officer of the council, as the council may decide, should be available to explain important items, to answer questions, and to provide "background" information; and

(c) That committees generally should extend the practice, already adopted by some local authorities, of presenting to the council, in addition to their minutes, fuller reports on matters of special importance, together with periodical and comprehensive reports upon their work generally. Such reports should be prepared primarily with the object of

informing the public, through the Press, of what the committee is doing and proposing.

Fuller Speeches in Council

(iv) *Council Meetings*—The council meeting naturally, provides the main source of news of local government activity, and most local newspapers report council meetings at length. Such reports, however, are often of much less value than they might be, sometimes because the most interesting topics are debated by the council in committee, and thus in secret, sometimes because decisions are reached without either explanation or discussion, and sometimes because councillors themselves fail, in discussion, to remember that their hearer include the public as well as their fellow councillors. If councillors generally were to bear in mind that, when speaking in open council, they are addressing not only the council whose members are likely to have special knowledge of the subject under discussion but also, through the Press, the community at large, whose members are unlikely to have such special knowledge, Press reports of council meetings would be more interesting, and more likely to increase public knowledge of the work of the local authority.

In this connection our attention has been drawn to the fact that some local authorities make inadequate provision for the Press to attend their meetings. Accommodation for newspaper reporters in the council chamber is sometimes inadequate or badly sited, and the poor acoustics of some council chambers make it difficult for reporters to hear all that is said.

In view of our earlier emphasis on the importance of securing in the Press the fullest possible reports of council meetings, we would urge all local authorities to see that proper facilities are given to the Press, both in existing council chambers and in all which may be built in the future.

It is equally desirable that all council chambers should contain ample, comfortable, and well-placed accommodation for members of the public who wish to attend meetings of the local authority. Attendance at a well-conducted council meeting can provide admirable education in the principles and practice of local government, and local authorities should do all they can to encourage it, both by individual citizens and by conducted parties of school children and members of groups and organisations studying local government.

Value of Press Conferences

(v) *The Press Conference*—Committee reports and council debates, however well prepared and presented, cannot always provide that complete information and background of knowledge necessary if the Press and the public are to be as fully informed as they should be, nor, of course, can they deal with matters arising between meetings. There is, therefore, need for additional means of contact between the local authority and the Press. Where the authority is a small one this will normally be secured without any special provision by the contacts the Press itself will make with councillors and officers—provided that there exists between them that spirit of co-operation and mutual trust and understanding which it should be the object of each to attain. A bigger authority may need to make some special provision and for this purpose we recommend the Press conference, already adopted with success by Cabinet Ministers, Government departments, industrial organisations, and some local authorities.

The Press conference, when properly conducted, has a four-fold value. It enables the local authority to give information to Press

representatives, to explain that information, and to answer questions upon it; it provides an opportunity for giving "background" and "off the record" information in such a way as to ensure that reports of and comment upon local government affairs are responsible and informed; it gives newspaper representatives an opportunity to ask questions and thus both to clear up doubtful points and to obtain that independent "angle" on the news which they consider so valuable; and it enables representatives of local government and of the Press to state their respective points of view and difficulties and to discuss controversial topics frankly and constructively.

Procedure of the Conference

The procedure of the Press conference would depend upon local conditions. Where the local authority was a big one, with many activities and served by a number of local newspapers, it might be held at a fixed time each week—with, if necessary, a special conference after each meeting of the council—and be attended by representatives of all newspapers in the area, the public relations officer who would be responsible for the arrangements, the chairman of the council, the clerk to the council, and any chairmen of committees and chief officers interested in the matters likely to be mentioned. At this meeting, Press representatives would be handed copies of reports, minutes, agendas, etc., would be given all necessary supplementary information, would have the council's plans and policies outlined, and would be given frank and authoritative answers to their questions.

In a smaller authority, the Press conference might be held by the public relations officer or the clerk alone, members of the council and other chief officers attending only when they wished to do so or when matters of special interest to them were likely to be raised.

The important point, in our view, is that in every type of authority the conference should be held frequently, that its atmosphere should be cordial and informal, and that information should be given frankly and fully.

Information at all Times

In advocating the Press conference, we do not wish to imply that it should be regarded as the only means of informal contact between the local authority and the Press. Today, most local newspapers have direct contact with members and officers of local authorities and know to whom they may go for information on any topic. The Press conference should not, in our view, supplant, but should supplement these direct contacts. At the same time, the means of direct contact should be improved and extended. News may become available between the meetings of a Press conference, or the enterprise of a particular newspaper may disclose a story which its rivals have not discovered and the first publication of which it naturally wishes to reserve to itself. To provide for such circumstances, some officer or member of the council should be available to see Press representatives at all convenient times and to give such information as is needed and is available.

Through these regular and friendly contacts with the Press, a local authority should be able to ensure not only that newspaper comment is fair and well-informed, but also that the great influence of the newspapers is used to encourage citizens to take a more active interest in their local government.

Publications

Valuable as the newspaper can be in disseminating news and views upon local authority activity, it is essentially ephemeral and able to deal only with the events of the day. In addition to the Press, therefore, local government must make full use of more permanent

means of projecting itself into the public consciousness.

Although there are today several excellent books on local government, there is still a real need for popular expositions of the subject and for books specially written for school children. . . . Public service—its achievements, its opportunities, and its satisfactions—can and should be a fascinating topic, offering full scope for those qualities of endeavour, sacrifice, enterprise, and idealism which represent the highest elements in man's nature but which, in modern society, appear to be evoked only by war or revolution.

There is a great scope for cheap, simple and vigorously written books on local government, convincing the reader that it can offer him those emotional and spiritual satisfactions his nature demands, and showing him how, through it, he can play a personal part in the creation of the world his idealism seeks. It should be one of the functions of the Local Government Public Relations Council, to which we refer later, to encourage the publication of such books.

In addition, each local authority should publish an annual report of its activities which it should make freely available to all citizens.

Some local authorities did publish such reports before the war, but their quality and value varied widely. The ideal report, in our view, should be of handy size, short, well and interestingly written, and profusely illustrated with good photographs illustrating the many activities and services of the local authority. The text should not be too detailed, but should describe in simple and graphic terms the range and scope of the authority's work and seek to explain to the citizen both its extent and value to the communal well-being and the part he himself can and should play in increasing its value.

Local authorities must also, from time to time, make use of posters, leaflets, pamphlets, Press advertisements, and similar material designed to bring their services to the notice of the public or to seek the co-operation of the public in desirable activities—such as road safety, diphtheria immunisation, the anti-litter campaign, etc. There is scope for great improvement in the standard of such material which today often fails of its full effect by reason of faulty lay-out, unsuitable language, and failure to understand popular psychology.

VII. Public Meetings

Experience during the war—in the Forces, in the Civil Defence services, in pre-service and youth organisations, in radio discussion groups, and in Ministry of Information meetings—has shown that readiness to hear about, to consider, and to discuss questions, even abstract and difficult questions, of popular concern is present in large sections of the population and requires only the use of suitable methods to bring it out.

An active public relations officer who is himself a good speaker and who has the support of his local authority should have little difficulty in restoring the public meeting to its former place as a centre for local discussion and constructive thought, especially if he makes use of such devices as "brains trusts," films, youth parliaments, etc., to attract an audience and evoke interest.

The community centres which are likely to be greatly developed after the war, as well as clubs and organisations of all kinds, would provide a fertile field for activities of this kind of which full use should be made, and the Public Relations Council (the creation of which is recommended below) might assist by preparing notes for speakers, supplying suitable films, suggesting topics for debate, and collecting and circulating advice on the most useful techniques. In addition, the local

public relations officer should prepare, from the members and officers of the authority, and from local personalities, such as leaders of voluntary organisations, a panel of speakers qualified to talk on local government topics.

VIII. Voluntary Organisations

The voluntary organisation plays an essential part in the life of every community, which is likely to become more important after the war. In the past, the relationship between local authorities and voluntary organisations has not everywhere been so satisfactory as it should have been. In some areas, co-operation has been close and effective, but in others both local authorities and voluntary organisations have displayed mutual suspicion, jealousy, and hostility which has made co-operation difficult. The ideal relationship between them, in our view, should be one of complete mutual understanding and collaboration, each recognising that the other has a part to play in developing communal well-being and each ready, in an atmosphere of give and take, to make the most of the particular functions and opportunities of the other.

In this connection, the local Councils of Social Service, which are being set up in many areas to encourage collaboration among voluntary organisations and to fit them into a comprehensive pattern of social welfare embracing all social agencies, statutory and voluntary, offer an admirable opportunity for developing this partnership. Local authorities should seek to establish and maintain the closest contact with Councils of Social Service, wherever practicable to the extent of being actively represented upon them by both members and officers.

IX. Information Bureaux

Many of the larger local authorities already maintain central information bureaux to which citizens seeking information about particular services may go to have their questions answered without the need to seek out—sometimes at great personal inconvenience—the particular department or office to which their inquiry directly refers, and local authorities have been recommended to establish such bureaux during the war to give advice on post-raid welfare arrangements.

We consider that the maintenance of an adequate public information bureau of this kind should be regarded as an essential and permanent feature of a local authority public relations service.

In the areas of the larger authorities the bureau might with advantage be placed in the charge of the public relations officer and housed at the town hall or civic centre with, if the need existed, branch offices at convenient points such, for example, as public libraries. The information bureau might also deal, in the first instance at least, with complaints made by citizens against the local authority. It would, no doubt, be found in practice that many complaints could be answered at the information office itself, the staff of which would be trained and experienced in the courteous and speedy handling of grievances. Complaints which could not be dealt with at the information bureau could be referred from it to the appropriate department—which should likewise possess facilities for dealing with them courteously and expeditiously. A system of this kind would have a threefold advantage:

(i) It would provide for the citizen one central office to which he might take his problems, queries, and grievances, instead of as sometimes happens today, having to be referred from one department to another before obtaining satisfaction;

(ii) It would ensure that information was given and that most complaints were dealt with by staff specially trained in the work; and

(iii) It would enable the public relations officer to keep a watch on requests for information and on complaints and thus to discover upon what matters further publicity was needed and in respect of which departments any unusual volume or persistence of complaints appeared to call for inquiry and administrative remedy.

No Supplanting of C.A.B.

In some quarters it has been suggested that local authorities should take over the work of advising the citizen upon personal problems and difficulties now performed in many areas by the Citizens' Advice Bureaux. In our view this would be undesirable. We consider that a clear distinction should be drawn between information about local government services and policies, which it is the clear duty of the local authority to provide, and advice upon personal problems. In the giving of such advice we believe that an unofficial body, free of the restrictions to which any organisation controlled by statute must inevitably conform, is likely to be of greater help to the citizen and to be more readily consulted by him. Moreover, there is a large sphere in which it would be improper for a local authority to advise, since if it did so it would be intervening in issues which lie between private citizens and helping one as against the other.

We do, however, suggest that the local authority should offer its fullest practical support to the unofficial Citizens' Advice Bureau, subsidising it where necessary and being strongly represented on its governing body.

The public relations officer should maintain close collaboration with the advice bureau and individual local government officers should be encouraged, where desired, to serve on its voluntary staff and to give it all the assistance in their power. In this way, and through its own information bureau, the local authority would demonstrate to the citizen that it was not a remote and mainly restrictive body, antagonistic to his interests, but existed solely for his benefit.

X. The Film

The possibilities of using the film to arouse interest in, and impart information about, local government are great. Four different types of film might be used:

(a) *The Entertainment Film*—Apart from incidental references—mainly as a source of comedy and mild ridicule—in a number of films, the only entertainment film yet produced in this country which has dealt seriously and effectively with local government was the screen version of Winifred Holtby's novel, "South Riding." . . . This . . . demonstrated that there is romance and drama such as will appeal to the filmgoer to be found in the struggle against ignorance, squalor, and disease and the fight for communal well-being no less than in the emotional entanglements of individuals. It showed that the feature film with local government as its theme was a practical possibility . . .

In our view, the post-war period, when it will be necessary to direct the thoughts of the community from the struggle against aggression to the more constructive and no less vital struggle against the evils and perils of peace, will be ripe for just such a film or films, and the matter is one which might usefully be examined by the proposed Public Relations Council in conjunction with the film industry.

(b) *Educational Films*—The need for, and value of, educational films on local government is widely recognised. Many teachers who have used the film agree that, provided it is made specifically for school use by experts fully aware of its possibilities and limitations,

it can be of enormous value in simplifying difficult concepts, bringing to life formal class teaching, widening experience, and imparting knowledge.

There is a great need for a series of short school films which will deal simply and clearly with the history of local government, its present structure, its method of working, the operation of its various departments and services, the way in which it is financed, and the possibilities for its future development.

There is now a wide and growing body of experience on the use, needs and production of teaching films, and by taking advantage of that experience the Public Relations Council could, with little difficulty, plan and produce a series of films of the type suggested.

(c) *The Documentary Film*—Before the war, British film units had established a world reputation in the production of "documentary" films—that is to say, films presenting a factual picture of some particular aspect of life and activity—and wartime experience has enhanced that reputation and established a firm place for the documentary.

The Public Relations Council might profitably examine the question of local government documentary films and seek, in consultation with experienced producers, to prepare a comprehensive and continuous series.

Allied to the documentary is the magazine film of which the American "March of Time" is the pioneer. This also would find many topics of interest in local government to which the attention of producers might be directed.

Films for Staff Training

(d) *Training Films*—Perhaps the most striking use of the film during the war has been as a means of rapid and effective training. The Armed Forces, Civil Defence Services, and armament factories have found it of exceptional value in "breaking down" difficult techniques, explaining and demonstrating complex processes, and expounding new methods and devices to large numbers of people.

A similar use might be found for this type of film in peace time, both in the technical and professional training of local government staffs and in showing the citizen how best he can make full use of his local government services . . .

The production of such films would also fall suitably within the terms of reference of the Public Relations Council.

Most, if not all, the films suggested above would best be envisaged and produced on a national scale. Even with so comprehensive a scheme, however, there would still be scope for the purely local film, illustrating the work and objectives of a particular local authority.

While local films would be essentially local in conception and interest, they should nevertheless conform to a general pattern. . . . For this reason it would be desirable that local authorities, before producing local films, should consult with the films committee of the Public Relations Council. The Public Relations Council might, indeed, find it advantageous to establish its own local government film unit which, in addition to producing the national films, could undertake the production of local films—with resultant economies in cost, continuity of treatment, and improvement in technique as the lessons of experience were absorbed and applied.

Local authorities might also make good use of the film to provide an annual review of their services and progress. . . .

Through the film they could take citizens on a tour of their town, pointing out improvements and new developments, showing where

further improvements were planned or needed, revealing the complex machinery behind each service, analysing, in moving diagram, the complexities of local finance and administration, and showing the citizen how his personal co-operation could assist the authority to work more efficiently and contribute to the greater well-being of the community.

XI. Exhibitions

The exhibition, particularly in the form to which recent improvements in design and demonstration technique have brought it, can be of great value in the field of local government public relations. . . . Local government exhibitions might usefully take a number of forms, some of which are suggested below:

(a) *The National Exhibition*—This, which would need to be organised by the Public Relations Council, would deal with local government as a branch of national life. It would show, by means of models, diagrams, dioramas, and photographs, the structure of local government, the relations between local and central government, and between one local authority and another, the means by which local government is financed, and the broad national planning of town and country, housing, hospitals and health services, roads and transport, water supply, land drainage and sewage disposal, education, social welfare, parks and playing fields, etc. It would deal also with each service individually, showing examples of special enterprise and of the best practices . . . thus serving as a yardstick by which each citizen could compare the activities of his own local authority with the best examples from the whole country. Such an exhibition might be duplicated, one being permanently housed in London (where it would be kept continuously up to date), and the other sent on tour throughout the country.

(b) *The Local Exhibition*—This would illustrate, by the use of models, diagrams, dioramas, photographs, etc., the history, present services, and future plans of the particular local authority which organised it, and might be held separately from or in conjunction with the national exhibition. A local exhibition should be held annually or biennially, possibly in connection with other local celebrations, such as a civic week, and special arrangements should be made for parties of school children to visit it and have the exhibits explained to them. Ample trained staff should be available for this purpose and to answer the questions of visitors. In addition to this comprehensive short-period exhibition, the best exhibit from it might, with advantage, form the nucleus for a permanent exhibition housed in the local museum, while copies of the exhibits might be supplied on loan to schools, clubs, and other groups studying local government. The Public Relations Council should take a special interest in local exhibitions, encouraging local authorities to organise them and assisting them with exhibition material and advice based on the best experience.

XII. Anniversaries and Celebrations

Every local authority should hold at least once a year a "Civic Week," during which, by means of exhibitions, film shows, public meetings, lectures, pageants, demonstrations, lessons in schools, civic religious services, "open days" at municipal institutions, etc., it would seek to publicise its services and arouse the interest of the citizens in them.

In addition, it should make the fullest possible use of all relevant anniversaries and celebrations to engender civic pride among its citizens and to give them a knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, its work and achievements.

In addition to the local public relations machinery outlined above, there is, we feel, need for some body to engage in public relations for local government at the national level. Some of the projects already suggested are likely to be beyond the powers of any individual local authority and could properly be carried out only on a national scale.

What is required, we suggest, is a Local Government Public Relations Council, representing all local authorities, and all interested in local government, which would "project" the general ideas and principles of local government among the citizens of Britain.

This council, we suggest, should be composed of representatives of the associations of local authorities, the organisations of local government officers, and relevant voluntary organisations.

The Council should be provided with adequate funds, raised by a levy upon the local authorities represented upon it, and with a competent and sufficient staff. Its function would be similar to that of the local public relations committee, but on a national scale. Thus it would:

(i) Disseminate at the national level, and through national media (Press, radio, films, books, exhibitions, etc.) information about the general working of local government nationally;

(ii) Engage in "consumer research" activities designed to elicit popular needs and demands affecting local government and to interpret those needs and demands to administrators and the legislature;

(iii) Maintain a continuous survey of all methods both of investigating and analysing public opinion and of interpreting administrative actions and services to the public, with a view to making full use of every suitable method;

(iv) Co-ordinate the activities of all other bodies engaged in education for citizenship;

(v) Assist in every practicable way from its own wider resources the separate local authority public relations committees.

Continuous Policy Essential

The adoption, locally and nationally, of a comprehensive public relations policy on the lines suggested above would, we feel, have a profound and far-reaching effect on the attitude of the citizen towards his local government and would do much to replace the prevailing apathy towards it with a lively and co-operative interest.

It must be emphasised, however, that a policy of public relations for local government, if it is to succeed, must be continuous and ambitiously planned. A half-hearted short-term policy is doomed to failure. The dead weight of apathy to be countered is so great, the competition of rival interests so keen, that only the most extensive programme, maintained over a period of years, and kept constantly fresh by the adoption of new ideas and methods, can hope to prove effective.

Such a programme will be expensive when measured against the present modest standards of local government publicity—although its cost would bear no comparison with the colossal sums spent annually in advertising patent medicines, food and drink, and other articles of popular consumption. Spread over all local authorities, the product of a penny rate would yield to-day over £1,300,000—sufficient to pay for all the schemes we have suggested. The long-term dividends, in popular interest and a more alert and efficient local government, contributing more effectively than at present to the common weal, would be out of all proportion to the expenditure involved. Moreover, the increase in citizen co-operation which might justifiably be expected to result, would provide substantial economies in administration which would go far to offset the expenditure involved.

We Must Make Local Government a Vocation for Every Officer

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**By W. S. STEER, Hon. Secretary, South-Western District
Area Education Committee.**

"GOVERNMENT," said Henry Clay, "is a trust, the officers of the government are trustees; and both the trust and the trustees are created for the benefit of the people." Judged by this standard, I suggest that the present local government system embodies a number of weaknesses, of which the two most important—from which some of the others are derived—are:

A lack of a sense of vocation and public service among local government officers, resulting in an uninspired and reactionary administration based largely on precedent; and

A tendency by officers to regard their own work as a sphere of influence which must be defended against the invasion of any outside interest.

All will not agree with my first charge. It is, however, my honest conviction that there do not exist among us the enthusiasm and ideals of public service that are so necessary if we are to do justice to our work.

There can be few authorities where there is not some degree of rivalry, or often of open struggle, between sectional interests—for example, between different services and different departments, or between the technical advisers and inspectorate and the administration of a particular service. This insularity of outlook pervades the lower levels, and there is often a chronic lack of co-operation, amounting sometimes to hostility, between different sections in the same office. In this constant struggle the efforts of the staff seem to be directed more to preserving a sense of self importance than to the benefit of the people.

Better Promotion System Needed

To remedy this state of affairs, real efforts should be made to give our members a sense of the value of the contribution good local government has to make to the well-being of society and of the responsibilities of trusteeship attaching to the service. The public services differ from private enterprise in that they are not run for profit. In industry, the profit motive provides a rough and ready guarantee of efficiency. While there are ways in which the consumer-ratepayer can impose his will upon local authority administration, it is generally true that the impulse for improvement and efficiency must come largely from within and is not imposed from without.

The civil service has found a solution of this problem in the system of promotion based on competition and the recognition of merit rather than seniority. The civil service entrant has his interest aroused by the prospect of adequate rewards for his diligence. Later, he finds, as all true students find, that, although he may have embarked upon his studies with purely selfish motives, virtue is its own reward, and his daily work becomes much more than a means of livelihood. He is given wider responsibilities and his professional life becomes richer and more satisfying. The value of his training, enthusiasm, and sense of public duty is not lost to the community.

By contrast, the method of promotion in local government is haphazard. It is said that a man's gift will make room for him. I should say, however, that, in general, in the local government service, the possession of post-entry qualifications and training, and the evidence of an enlightened interest in public administration, do not give an officer any advantage over his colleague who does his limited duties reasonably efficiently but does not display any personal resource or wider interest. The criterion is almost wholly one

of seniority, and it is usually only where there is some weakness in the other fellow that the trained officer receives special recognition. The loss to the service is enormous and the standard of efficiency is not as high as it might be.

In my view, the prestige of the local government service is not equal to that of the civil service, and our service does not enjoy, as it should, a full measure of public confidence and recognition. Many officers suffer from a sense of frustration or grow cynical at finding themselves in a service in which it is frankly admitted that luck is a greater factor in determining prospects than personal efficiency. Men of ability are turning elsewhere to find an outlet for their capacities.

More Emphasis on Administration

These unfortunate consequences are aggravated by the fact that in local government the specialist and technical expert is "on top" not, as in the civil service, "on tap." Thus, the chief officer of the health department is a doctor, of the education department an experienced teacher, and of the surveyor's department, a surveyor, and so on. While I do not disparage the contribution made by these officers, and certainly do not imply that their expert training is not essential, I do suggest that they cannot be equally expert in the science of public administration, nor appreciate fully the need of administrative training and ability in organising the work of their departments on progressive lines.

Such men tend to treat administrative matters as unworthy of their professional training, and to leave them to subordinates, with the implicit, although unspoken, understanding that the less the chief is bothered with the day-to-day running of the office, the more successful will the subordinate be judged to be. The result is obvious—change is to be avoided at all costs and new methods are suspect. An officer will commonly spend the whole of the forty years or so of his official life not only in one office, but in one small section of that office. He becomes entrenched in his position, his outlook is narrowed, the scope of initiative is reduced to a minimum, and inevitably there arise that pettiness and sectional friction which are such deadly weaknesses in the local government service.

The Hadow Committee drew attention to these deficiencies by stressing the need of a system of recruitment, training, and promotion of local government officers which would attract the right type of entrant to the service, give him a sense of the value of the part he plays in the community, and provide him with the incentives to apply to his professional life his fullest potentialities.

We owe it to the community and to our colleagues in the Forces to raise local government administration to the status of a recognised profession; to stress the importance of the study of public administration as a science; and to press for a greater recognition of the value of administrative training and ability by urging the creation of senior administrative posts in all branches of the service—especially those branches in which the highest posts have, generally speaking, been reserved for technical officers.

I want to see NALGO taking energetic steps to ensure that the recommendations of the Hadow Report are translated into action. If we ourselves do not put our house in order, it is likely to be put in order for us from above—and I am sure which of these alternatives we should prefer.



"GEE, we gotta do something for those boys," said Daffy, swinging round on her chair, which has become so used to her working habits that, if left alone, it will do an about turn every five minutes.

"We certainly ought," I agreed. "First there was Harold the Highflyer, then there was Sailor Bill, then the Yank—"

"There was a man," said Daffy dreamily. "Captured a machine-gun nest with his bare hands. Sank a U-boat by treading on it while he was bathing. And he was all ready to marry me and then go back to Salt Lake City to face his wife and six kids..."

"But I didn't mean those guys, I meant those guys," she continued, gazing out of the window. Across the street, two men in hospital blue were limping along.

"It's an idea," we admitted, grudgingly. But the following day, when Rufus came to visit us during one of his many off-spells as a Public Negotiations Officer (he explains these as being due to his own efficiency—he is so good at putting people off that he is scarcely ever on himself) the project of entertaining some wounded soldiers was mentioned to him as an established possibility.

"Splendid!" he said. "Now, my sister—" "Oh, we can't have relatives," I broke in hastily. "This is a local government show—" "Show," said George, "that's it—why don't we put on a show at the hospital?"

"That's right—then they'd all suffer equally," I said rather bitterly, knowing that my one gift—the ability to wiggle my ears to the tune of "God Save the King," provided no one is watching to make me nervous—was unlikely to be in demand.

The others were less modest. "I know they'd appreciate some really good music," said Miss Gymbol, looking far more soulful than she ever does while putting her whole vocal shirt on the Wings of a Dove.

"Somebody to lead a sing-song," suggested George, who fancies himself with an accordion.

"Some jive," said Daffy and Betty. "Charades," Mr. Barrington joined in. "In my young days I was always applauded to the echo. I was the one who went on at the end, bearing a placard with the complete word..."

"My sister's dramatic club," said Rufus determinedly, "put on a play at one of the military hospitals. Our best move would be to finance a visit by the dramatic club to the other hospital..."

"That play," Miss Gymbol said icily, "was a bedroom farce of the lowest order."

"Well, if the troops want bedroom farces, I'm all in favour..."

"Oh, let's have a concert party—that'll square us all," said Daffy, swaying experimentally a part of her anatomy which was far from square.

Rufus was appointed to be in charge of the concert party—not because of any qualification, but because, if anyone else were elected, Rufus would make himself a nuisance by perpetually criticising and suggesting improvements.

As the one person not concerned, I soon knew more about the concert party than anyone else. I learned, for instance, that Daffy was proposing to make such a display of herself as would bring the ancient fathers of our town rushing pellmell from their graves (not, as I suggested, to have a peek at what was going on). On the other hand, it seemed that Miss Gymbol was ruining the show by squawking some 'highbrow' sob-stuff, while clapping her hands before her bosom to catch the bits in the event of her bursting with exertion.

The one thing agreed by everyone was that Rufus was hyper-critical; it was felt that he was trying to sabotage the whole thing so that his sister's beastly dramatic club could step in and steal our thunder.

"That lot have as much idea of co-operation as a flea with a dog to itself," said Rufus to me

on the day after his resignation. (I never could find out which had come first: the request that he resign, or his telling the others to take their concert party to a place where it would be sure of a warm reception.)

Shortly afterwards, the members of the concert party reached a stage where they would not even rehearse together because of catty comments, possible plagiarism, etc. But somehow they managed to agree that, on the night before the



"Why, of course we're keeping your job open for you, my dear boy. Here you are!"

hospital performance, each would be given an audience by me to make sure his turn was up to standard.

Miss Gymbol was first on the programme and, while I had to admit that Daffy's comment on her performance was fairly accurate, I could not find it in me to say that the wounded soldiers' hearts would not be rendered by her rendering of "Passing By."

Mr. Barrington then treated me to a one-man charade, which, he said, represented the title of a song. He rushed (in a dignified fashion) from one end of the room to another, pausing now and then to gaze into space, his hand shading his eyes.

"Sailor's Hornpipe!" I shouted, but this earned me a frown of reproof.

"Sister Ann, Sister Ann, is anyone coming?" was my next shot—but of course "Bluebeard" is a fairy-tale, if you like your fairy-tales with a dash of Dr. Petiot.

Came the Dawn. "Passing By," I said weakly, while Mr. Barrington bowed carefully.

Daffy and young Betty did a double turn. After jiggling around a bit, they sang something which hadn't much tune, about "In old-fashioned days they knew a thing, or two, but they didn't know how to swing"—which meant that another unfortunate classical tune was due for murder.

I had an awful presentiment as to what was coming. "Till I—till I—die-hie," they chanted with emblazoned grins. "I did but see her passing—passing—passing—"

When George handed me a community song-sheet with the now familiar words on it, I rebelled.

"If you catch sight of anyone else passing, passing, passing," I said, reaching for my hat, "you can tell 'em I've darn well passed on—to the Local Government Arms."

Fortunately, the dramatic club was able to take the engagement at short notice. Because the wounded soldiers whistled and cheered and roared at the bedroom farce, Rufus seems to think that everything was splendid. The others are not so sure—especially as they recall that it was Rufus who first suggested to each of them, as something which was likely to steal the show, an old-fashioned song called "Passing By."

AT RANDOM

By "Hyperion"

Thought for Peace

No man is more remote than an Englishman from the doggedness of long-lasting and indelible revenge.

Sir Tobin Matthew (a Courtier of Charles I).

Herd Instinct

"Why does one go to parties?"

"Just to feel the warmth of the herd around one and sniff the smell of one's fellow humans."

—Aldous Huxley.

The Virtue of Riches

When you are totally uneducated and have amassed an enormous fortune by legalised swindling, you can afford to believe in the elusiveness of matter, the non-existence of evil, the oneness of all diversity, and the spirituality of everything.—*ibid.*

The Worm Has Turned

Questionnaires used to make me sore,

Red tape used to turn me grey,

But I don't get furious any more—

I just stay that way!—Thomas Usk.

Pass the Milk to Dorothy!

Dorothy Parker's advice to the woman who kept saying she had something preying on her mind for the past few days is: "Don't worry, my dear, it's probably starved to death by now."

Portrait of a Bachelor

A bachelor is someone who

Thinks one can live as cheap as two.

—Eleanor S. J. Rydberg.

One Touch of Nature

An American soldier in England, of Italian origin, found himself near Italian prisoners of war, and talked to them through the barbed wire. After a while he ran back to his sergeant shouting excitedly: "Say, sergeant, these fellas are O.K.—absolutely O.K." The sergeant asked him what he meant. "Why," said the private, "what I mean is they're O.K., quite O.K.—they hate the English just as much as we do."

—From "And Yet I Like America," by J. L. Hodson.

Corresponding Types

Bad as is he who for months upon end

Neglects to reply to your letter,

Still worse, in a way, is that fast-writing friend

Who keeps you forever his debtor.

—Richard Armour.

Anticlimax Department

The slumbering fires of BLACK PANTHER attack a man's heart—attack a woman's—until the two hearts merge in a flame of ecstasy. Wear this new perfume for an unforgettable evening... but only if you dare risk the danger and dark delight of stirring primitive emotions. At all 10c. stores.

—Adv. in Modern Screen Magazine.

The Yanks Do It Too

A handy glossary of American bureaucratic terms, indispensable to the business man and to those seeking a career in Washington society.

YOU, too, can talk like a Government official. Learn it in your own home by this amazingly simple, direct conversational method. "Spell out the over-all picture"—the official, for once, knows what he's talking about and doesn't want to sit down. (See also "Blueprint the program.")

"Organizational know-how"—something his department has that others don't, and, incidentally, the reason why he should be left in the job. "In process on a lower level."—Your papers have been lost.

"In our inactive file, pending future action."—You heard us, your papers are lost. Take it like a man.

"Returned to active file."—We found them! "Policy level."—Smoke pipes and eat in executives' dining room.

"Operational level."—Eat in the cafeteria downstairs.

"Return to private industry."—The boss got cashiered.

"Separated."—A minor official got cashiered.

"Freed for civilian production."—A lot of war workers got cashiered.

"A cutback."—Army guessed wrong on its needs.

"Essential to war effort."—Naturally.

—Caskie Stinnett.

HE N.E.C. notice of motion on the Conference agenda asking that members' subscriptions be increased by 33½ per cent, is, in my opinion, the most brazen ever submitted, and for the life of me I cannot see the reason for such an undignified suggestion.

From the amount of subscriptions already paid by members, one would expect NALGO to have a substantial bank balance. If it has not, there should be a drastic overhaul of the Association's financial and other activities. If there is no substantial balance, why were four organisers sent only to the staff when they could have been more usefully employed on national, municipal, or industrial work?

Why is it that another trade union, associated with NALGO on the Whitley Council, is asked for a subscription of sixpence a week, to receive its members legal assistance and accident, gratuity, and dispute benefits, whilst NALGO members—what?

How does the suggested increase compare with members' salaries? Since the outbreak of war, various war-bonus additions have been made to salaries, amounting at present to 23s. a week, and the full bonus is being received. To be set against this are the increased cost of commodities and higher income tax demands.

Even with this bonus, salaries have fallen in terms of purchasing power, since the outbreak of war. For example, the officer whose pre-war salary was £300 and who spent £250 of that on living expenses, would need an additional £102 10s. a year to make his present salary equivalent to 1939 one. On top of that, his income tax summing he is a married man without children) increased from £5 12s. in 1939 to £54 2s. today. Effect, therefore, his salary has been reduced £102 10s. plus £48 10s. (the difference between today and in 1939), less £59 10s. bonus—a net reduction of £91 4s.

It is because of this reduction in the value of salaries that I say that the N.E.C. notice of motion is a most brazen one.

For sheer impudence, notices of motion numbers 1 (proposing that consideration of affiliation to T.U.C. be deferred) and 23 (proposing no interference with the right of Conference to determine the policy of the Association) would be hard to beat. It would appear as though the N.E.C. is competing for a new type of dictatorship, by majority ballot votes by members should be decided both on the N.E.C. and on the delegates elected in Conference. Failure to implement the policy indicated by the majority vote should result in the compulsory resignation of all concerned in that refusal or failure.

Warwick. J. E. GILLARD.

Our correspondent betrays a lamentable ignorance of NALGO. Dealing with his points in detail:

1. Present NALGO subscriptions average, not per week, but 4.43d. (excluding all the 38,000 members on war service, whose subscription, if paid all, is 1.15d. a week.) Of this amount, about 1d. is retained by branches, leaving 2.87d. per week per member for all national activities.

2. For this, NALGO members get free legal advice and assistance, regardless of cost, free representation by the Association's staff in any claims upon or disputes with local authorities, full and comprehensive trade union work (which has in them superannuation, cost of living bonus, supplementation of war service pay, compensation for loss of office, and the reconstituted Whitley Council now considering a new "charter" for the whole service), a free monthly journal, educational assistance (including correspondence institute, library for students, scholarships, educational loans, and summer and week-end schools), the only public relations organisation for local government, holiday centres, a private hotel, a convalescent home, and the services of the Housing Society, Approved Society, Provident Society, Logonia, and Benevolent and Orphan Aid (these last admittedly self-supporting, but nevertheless available only because of the existence of the Association).

3. Should subscriptions be increased by 33½ per cent, they will average about 5.92d. per member per week (again excluding all on war service), with 56 per cent paying 4.62d. and under, 21 per cent (all earning from £260 to £350) paying 6d., 12 per cent earning £351 to £450) paying 7.61d., and 11 per cent (earning over £450) paying 9.23d.

4. While we agree that the cost of living bonus must be as high as we should like, or would regard as fair, it was never intended to offset entirely war

price increases and higher taxation. Had it done so, the local government officer would have been privileged indeed. Does our correspondent expect to fight a war without financial sacrifice?

5. Without still better organisation, NALGO may be unable to protect members against post-war salary cuts. And better organisation must be paid for.

6. The questions of affiliation to the T.U.C. and the right of members to determine policy by ballot

READERS' FORUM

Since next month's journal will be almost entirely devoted to the report of Conference, there will be room only for letters of special importance or urgent topical interest. They must reach the editor not later than June 28.

will be determined, not by the N.E.C., but by a Conference of democratically appointed and democratically instructed delegates. Where is the "dictatorship" in that?

CONFERENCE TEST

True Leadership Needed

THE forthcoming Conference will certainly be historic for the Association, but will it have the thinking that will mould a sound future?

The leadership I look for is not the leadership that merely sees where the crowd is going and marches in front of it, but a leadership of statesmanlike men guided by principle and a spirit of giving. Such men will unite the Association. The other kind of leadership may divide it with the sectional interests that spring from a spirit of "get."

The true destiny of local government lies in producing sound homes, communities that pull together, and a united nation. This year's Conference leadership must therefore keep centrally in mind the true destiny of local government service—setting a pattern of creative teamwork inspired thinking, honesty, and fair dealing.

Town Hall,
Wembley.

T. M. CARTLEDGE.

T.U.C. AFFILIATION

"Our Interests Identical"

YOUR masterly editorial in the May Journal underlined the host of problems with which NALGO is faced now that the European victory has come. The crucial question is whether we are to go ahead to a new Britain, or whether, through disunity and apathy, we shall drift back to the ghastly conditions of the 1930s with unemployment, malnutrition, and one of the worst housed populations in Europe. As local government officers and as citizens, we in NALGO have a critical rôle to play.

Without persistent pressure from the millions of ordinary people, utilising every form of democratic organisation open to them, our hopes of a high standard of living, a real health service, a better system of education, and homes for our returning Servicemen and for the hundreds of thousands living in unbearably overcrowded conditions will fade to nothing.

The most important organisation fighting for these basic needs is the T.U.C. It is the only organisation which can bring into one united body the clerks, the industrial workers, the professions, the technicians. Without active pressure from the T.U.C. not one reform in our "brave new world" would ever reach concrete form.

The T.U.C.'s part in winning this war has been no insignificant one—from the ranks of the Cabinet to the workers in the war factories. We should be proud to be part of it.

The civil servants are showing us a fighting example in their efforts to return to their former place alongside the industrial and other workers.

In the new Europe we find local government officers united with their fellows in one trade union organisation, as they were united in their underground activities against the enemy. A month or two ago trade unions from 40 odd countries met in London and showed us an example of unity and of determination that there shall be no going back.

So far the British local government officer has remained aloof. How much longer shall we delude ourselves that we can play the looker-on? Our interests and those of the unions in the T.U.C. are identical. This year, at last, we have the

opportunity to take the step which, I believe, will mean the greatest advance in the history of NALGO. We have a mandate—let us not forget the ballot—and we owe it to our Forces members to see that they come back to a NALGO with foundations and structure stronger than ever.

NALGO's destiny lies alongside the other professional men and women, the technicians, and the industrial workers inside the ranks of the T.U.C. Sooner or later we shall be there. Let it be this year!

45, John Street, ALEX. M. R. LANE.
Glasgow, C.I.

Branches Determine Votes

IN his letter on the affiliation debate in the May journal, "Parcare Subjectis" writes that "it is up to all branches to see that the right delegates attend Conference and that they are present when the vote is taken." Surely it is up to branches to instruct the delegate how his vote is to be cast. In most cases this is so, and it is wrong to infer that delegates vote how they wish. "Parcare Subjectis" infers that the chief officers attending Conference will vote as they wish and against affiliation. If they do so, and the branch wants affiliation, it is the fault of the branch and not of the delegate.

We see too many letters sneering at the efforts of chief officers to help in the work of NALGO. The obvious solution is not to choose chief officers as delegates if you have no confidence in them. "Parcare Subjectis" should remember that many chief officers are the people who have helped bring NALGO to the position it holds to-day.

L. A. GARRATT.

WHEN THE WARRIOR RETURNS

Are Branches Indifferent?

I SHOULD like to congratulate E. M. Hutchinson on his efforts for Service members as described in your December issue. It is a pity that other branches are not of like mind. I have been trying to persuade my own branch to form a special committee to deal with the many problems facing the Service members, but apparently they are "too busy" to bother about it.

This indifference of the branch to the problems of the Service member has led me to leave NALGO alone and join the British Legion, which is a live organisation.

C.M.F. V. G. PICKERING, Capt. R.E.

Those "Permanent" Jobs

SOME five years ago the country needed us. That is now diminishing and the more fortunate among us are contemplating our return to the local government service—the less fortunate having made the supreme sacrifice. What welcome awaits us? Is it a cordial one?

Judging by the opinion of "Festina Lente," in the March Journal, I doubt it. How smugly he remarks: "Despite the phenomenal efforts of the Red Army, the war in Europe will probably last for some time yet, and after that there will be the war in the Far East to be cleared up. We cannot suppose that warriors will be returning to the local government service in large numbers in the near future." One can almost hear his sigh of relief! He continues: "Local government officers who have remained in their jobs either through reservation, prolonged deferment, or medical unfitness, are making progress at their work, growing older in years and responsibilities, and naturally are seeking promotion. Are these unfortunates expected to give up their security of tenure and accept the uncertainty of a temporary post?"

Yes—most certainly let these "unfortunates" take a gamble, as we had to take a gamble, on coming back at all.

R.A.F., C.M.F.

"BARBARA."

The above letter was written on April 23, before the early end of the war in Europe became apparent.

A Fair Chance for All

OF course we would all like promotions to be carried on normally, especially the man in the Forces, who is losing by being "fixed" at his present position. But over all this, I can assure you by personal contact, all in the Forces want to see all wartime appointments made on a temporary basis, so that not only will all of us have a chance, but so that none shall feel we were unlucky by

virtue of being "in the colours." How a chief officer can feel that he is "qualified" because he is not called up beats me, for we are expressly retaining his rights too. After all, he might be called up yet!

Unless we continue to press for the "temporary" appointment principle, a sense of grievance will arise among those in the Forces which time will never erase. We are not asking people at home to accept lower conditions than those called up. All of us in the Forces are fighting for the "future." Please continue to keep a chance for us to take our rightful place under fair competition.

R.A.F.

S. H. HASSELL.

Service Man's Handicap

THE greatest handicap of the local government officer in the Forces is the loss of five, six, or more years of experience and the opportunity of continuing his studies to improve his qualifications; few can study satisfactorily under Service conditions. Members in the Forces will also suffer from several years' loss of increments, loss of promotion, and loss of the chance of new appointments, not to mention the effects of possible injury.

The suggestion of a correspondent in the April Journal that appointments should be made permanent where members of the same department now in the Forces lack the necessary qualifications and experience for the vacant posts, would be unfair, since, had they been at home those members might well have gained even better qualifications and experience than those to whom the posts would be given. Surely, if members are not to suffer as a result of active service, the gap in their careers must for several years to come be taken into account when assessing qualifications, even if it means appointing an ex-Service officer whose qualifications are inferior to those of a non-Service officer. Otherwise, the former will permanently be excluded from the higher appointments, and be continually and unsuccessfully striving to overcome this handicap.

R.A.F.

GEO. ASHWORTH,
Hereford city branch.

What the Commissioned Man May Learn

THE letter of D. Roberts in the April Journal is a compact of sour grapes, lack of common sense, and generalities based on insignificant facts. His statement that a man who attains the position of a high ranking N.C.O., or an officer, is less likely to be a good public servant than an ordinary soldier, airman, or seaman, shows that he has made a poor appreciation of the situation. I list below what an N.C.O. or commissioned officer may learn, if he wishes, by reason of his position, though, regrettably, not all take advantage of the golden opportunities.

1. To understand men
 2. To handle large bodies of men;
 3. To appreciate their difficulties and settle their differences;
 4. To obtain the opinions and views of men of all kinds on almost any subject;
 5. To organise, to carry responsibility, and to set an example.
 6. To have confidence in himself.
 7. To obtain the trust and confidence of his men.
- Surely these attributes are necessary and important in a public officer?

Finally, if, as Mr. Roberts suggests, the R.A.F. has a preponderance of N.C.O.'s and officers who are pampered, spoiled, selfish and lazy, let him visit me and I'll introduce him to many N.C.O.'s and officers which any municipality would be proud to employ.

B.L.A.

D. S. PEACOCK, Lt., R.A.

Forces Promotion No Fair Test

PROMOTION for most men in the Forces is a slow process—especially in the infantry and in technical trades—and many do not get it at all, through no fault of their own. Further, many, although not exactly "square pegs in round holes," are merely making the best effort possible at a war-time job; their real ability lies in their peace-time occupation.

The ability to lead a bayonet charge, to build a pontoon bridge, to fly a heavy bomber, or to organise an air-borne landing, does not necessarily make a good sanitary inspector, borough treasurer, housing manager, or director of education.

NALGO must forestall these self-centred

views of the "chosen few" and see that local authorities base promotion entirely upon qualifications and ability to perform a particular job without reference to any Service records, except possibly as a check on general integrity.

If the suggestions of "Captain, R.E." (May Journal) are carried out, we may as well dispense with NALGO, put all local government officers into uniform, and give the cemetery superintendent say the rank of "private," and the borough treasurer that of "Field Marshal," with twenty-

FILM COMPETITION

More than 70 readers responded to the invitation in the April journal to "plan a film about your job" and with such enthusiasm (one entry ran to over 10,000 words!) that the judges have been overwhelmed. We hope, however, to publish the result of the competition in next month's journal, and in the meantime thank competitors for the most encouraging interest they have shown.

five pips, two bars, four stars, and the skull and cross bones.

S.E.A.A.F.

A. E. A. HUMPHREY
(Barking Branch).

Why the Prejudice?

I AM sure that many of my colleagues who have attained promotion in the Services will agree with me that we have no desire to force our rank on our fellows in the local government service when we return. I know of no rule yet announced that says that any regard is going to be paid to our rank. Why then all this bad feeling? Surely the writers of these letters and those in agreement with them are not afraid of competing with us after the war. We have merely taken advantage of opportunities offered in the Forces, and if we have gained a lot of experience thereby, much of which will have some effect on our qualifications in civil life, it will not be our fault if they are not recognised by our employers.

I have experienced a lot of this attitude against promotion in the Forces. Promotion is not obtained as easily as some people appear to think, and requires much hard work and determination, and I count the experience thus gained as similar to knowledge I should have striven for by study in civil life. I do not think that Messrs. Jenkins and Roberts would take exception to any of their colleagues who improved their knowledge by study in their spare time. Why then show such hostility to those who have benefited from taking chances offered whilst away from their civilian jobs?

Abergavenny. D. G. JONES, Lt. R.A.S.C.

"Sack the Women"

WHILE I do not doubt that local authorities will take back all their men who return from the Forces, there is another aspect to which NALGO should give attention.

All women engaged since the war should be discharged when the time comes. This would be fair to the men who come back, both inside and outside our service. Male temporaries (especially if married) should have the opportunity of remaining. To sack them would flood the labour market with men, some of whom are at a critical age and would have little chance of other sedentary employment.

Survey.

EAGLE EYE.

CENTRAL BUYING

Benefits of System

THE letter from "Assistant Steward," in the April journal has obviously been written with little knowledge of the subject.

His suggestion that central buying is advocated by officers in the central departments to "increase their status and create new appointments within their circle" suggests the meanderings of a junior official, disappointed by the economic trend by which purchasing power is being transferred from institutional stewards and masters to officers who, by experience and technical training, are better qualified for the task.

Proof of the saving of ratepayers' money through central purchasing, for which he asks, has been given and is constantly available to county council and other local authority members. Does he suggest that the activities of, say, the L.C.C. supplies department, described in Mr. Boswell King's January article, could have been carried out with equal competence and efficiency by a collective group of stewards and masters?

The main benefits derived from a well-organised supplies department are:

- (a) Purchases are made direct from manufacturer at full trade rates; and
 - (b) such goods are supplied to specified prepared by technical assistants, the ensuring a better article being obtained.
- The old system as described by "Ass. Steward" reminds me of a Harry Tate sk. No, the days of the local grocer supplying P.A. institution at retail prices "less sp. discount" have gone for ever, notwithstanding that such "skilled tradesmen" were available for consultation.

One small comparison—war time quotas. manufacturer allocates short-supply article, wholesalers and first-hand buyers. The wholesaler re-allocates to his many retailers, some whom receive small quantities and others in Supplies departments, because of their large war buying, receive quotas in proportion—a favourable position.

On the technical side, can one imagine a steward or master being competent to prepare the draw and specifications necessitated not by one, many new hospitals and schools which any local authority is called upon to furnish and during a normal year? Or does he think all is unnecessary and that everything can be obtained ready made?

According to his theories, as I interpret them, the Admiralty could simplify its method, furnishing the Navy, by asking the equivalent of an assistant steward, to write out an order Vickers Armstrong for a battleship, standard pattern!

"OBSERVER."

CHECKING THE ROAD TOLL

Segregation Only Cure

NO one could quarrel with the general view expressed in your editorial note under the above heading in the May journal, but view with some concern your reference to I Joad.

Dr. Joad's opinions on road safety are typical of those which have prevailed for the past years and which, together with public apathy have led directly to the terrible number of road accidents which now occur.

I have experience as pedestrian, cyclist and driver of both motorcycles and cars, and I am convinced that a continuance of our past policy of legislating for the motor user only is merely futile and unprogressive, but positively dangerous. The only road safety proposals forward by those who incline to Dr. Joad's way of thinking are more taxation, red tape and repression of motorists and an increase of the 2,000 odd regulations and laws which there are at present expected to remember.

In my opinion, the true solution lies in segregation of traffic as advocated by the Road Safety Committee, and particularly slow traffic—horse drawn, cyclists and pedestrians—free faster traffic.

Propaganda, of course, has its value and he as you suggest, local authorities could render great service to the public, if only to bring home to parents the illogicality of permitting children to play in a 40-foot road with several vehicles passing every minute, when those same parents would be horrified if their children played on railway line which is only 4 ft. 8 in. wide and often used only about twice an hour.

If local authorities had jurisdiction over road matters in their areas, the result would be the same as if each stationmaster were made solely responsible for his own section of line.

Farnham, Surrey.

K. C. HOLMES.

LET COUNCILS CHOOSE M.P.s!

A Proposal from S.E.A.C.

I HAVE just seen LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE for February, 1944, sent in a Christmas parcel from my branch, and was interested in the letter from Lt. G. F. Hind, suggesting that every candidate for Parliament must first have served for three years on his local authority. This is a subject which has figured repeatedly in discussions among officers and men serving overseas within my sphere of contact, during the past three years. The main conclusions we reached were:

(a) All seats in the House of Commons should be re-allocated in ratio to the relative population of each county council, county borough, or municipal borough with sufficient population. This could be done to achieve fair representation of each parliamentary unit while reducing the present executive number of seats.

Each rural, urban, and borough council elect one or more of its members, according to its relative population, to sit on its county council; unless its population were sufficient to enable it to qualify for an M.P. of its own.

Each county, county borough and borough council with sufficient population should elect requisite number of councillors to be members of parliament, these M.P.s to be held responsible for local authority electing them for their conduct and actions in the House, and to hold seats for a fixed period of years, providing "continue to enjoy the confidence of their electors."

In a similar manner, the rural, urban, and borough councillors sitting on the county council should be held responsible to their parent council for the representation of its policy and wishes at meetings of the county council.

In this manner, a chain of responsibility would be established, starting from the M.P.s and running down to the rural, urban, and borough council or, in effect, down to the individual elector.

S. G. COTTON, Capt., R.E., M.A.,
Peterborough branch.
South-east Asia Command.

SSIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT and the "Purge"

His anxiety to score a point against the Soviet Union, "Novocastrian" ends his tirades from Walter Duranty at the point where they become interesting. For example, Duranty goes on to say: "It (the purge) eliminated completely Nazi plans for a Fifth Column in the U.S.S.R., and not only eradicated the dangerous elements with whom Nazi agents had to co-operate, but destroyed in toto their espionage and information services."

Miss Adams gave an accurate account of the lack of local government in the U.S.S.R. Her comment that all the citizens are socialists is, admittedly, true, but even among socialists various elements have arisen from time to time. It was such elements that the Soviet Government disposed of in the great trials of 1937-38.

The evidence of 1941 and after shows that the overwhelming majority supported the action of the Government in dealing with this dangerous party.

Other countries have been as prompt in disposing of their potential Fifth Columnists. Hitler did not have found it so easy to overrun Spain.

It is undeniable that in the U.S.S.R. every citizen is encouraged to play an active rôle in government, both nationally and locally. Were "Novocastrian" to vary his reading and turn to Sloan's "How the Soviet State is Run," he would find there an excellent and detailed examination of the methods and machinery of Soviet democracy.

West Ham branch. F. NEWMAN.

THE TASK FOR PEACE—

A New Spirit Needed

THE bringing of peace to Europe has directed our thoughts to the need for a new and better order which will provide us with a lasting peace worthy of our magnificent war effort.

As a local government officer with over 30 years' experience, I am convinced that to achieve a new spirit is needed. Everyone knows the irremediable waste of time and efficiency in every one of council work caused by sectional selfishness, personal hostility, credit snatching, and dull apathy. Our country at this crucial stage of history cannot afford this waste. We must induce a new philosophy, based on a change of human nature. Only so can men be lifted above self-interest and find unity possible.

10, Park Chase, CHARLES E. DOWSE.
Wembley.

And for NALGO

THANK you for printing the article by Mr. G. Louis Byles in the March journal. He, a Jamaican, has struck upon the essential foundations of our British local government.

NALGO, I am sure, exists to build upon what is best in local government. You would agree that, besides obtaining justice for the local government officer, it can show him how to give the greatest service.

As a local government officer and naval rating, I believe that a fighting faith, sound character, and teamwork make the backbone of both local government and the senior service.

JOHN BUSSENS.

NALGO HOUSE Members' Tribute

WE the undersigned, representative of all ages and varying conditions of health, are keenly desirous of placing on record our appreciation of the most kindly and courteous attention we have received whilst resident at "Nalگو House," Matlock.

The efforts of the matron and all her staff, combined with the purely informal and homely company of all grades of "Nalگوites," have far exceeded our expectations. The quantity, variety, and cooking of food have been all that could be desired, including the needs of those on special diets.

Situated in beautiful surroundings, the walks or rides are so numerous and varied that the infirm or agile may have equal choice in comfort and derive complete satisfaction in every way. We are proud to say, "Well done, NALGO."

R. B. WHALEY (Blackburn), M. R. WRANGHAM (West Hartlepool), B. JORDAN (Manchester), K. GLOVER (Wolverhampton), D. BUCKINGHAM (Portsmouth), D. CRAWFORD (Leyton), H. SOUTHALL (Watford), R. SPENCELEY (Holborn), T. H. BERRINGTON (Dorset), J. ALLWAY (Harrow), J. E. HURST (St. Helens), S. H. KEAN (Portsmouth), H. W. PENDRILL (Woolwich), LEONARD J. SHAW (Bethnal Green), M. WARD (Rotherham), J. PARRY (Manchester), S. MONKS (Walsall), T. V. SHRIVELL (Lambeth), G. T. GOUGHAN (Oxford), H. MAGRON (Willesden), JAMES P. LOVICK (Norwich), M. HEGINBOTHAM (Oldham), T. MAILEY (Liverpool), G. EATON (Tottenham), G. J. PRITCHARD (Liverpool), ETHEL G. TREVOR (Warrington).

NALGO EXHIBITION Public Analyst's Work

THE writer of the article describing the local government exhibition in the April journal attributes to sanitary inspectors the duties of "testing milk to see if it is free from the germs of disease" and "analysing foods and drugs for impurities and adulterants."

These processes are actually performed by that seldom heard of person, the public analyst, who is appointed under the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, and the Public Analysts Regulations, 1939. "The authorised officer" of a food and drugs authority who procures samples of foods and drugs for analysis and submits them to a public analyst if he considers they should be analysed, is defined in the Act as a "sampling officer." While in many areas sanitary inspectors act as sampling officers, this is not necessarily so, as I believe the police are appointed for this purpose by some authorities.

Moreover, the Act empowers members of the general public to submit their own samples. In any ensuing law action, however, it is the certificate of the public analyst that is accepted as relevant evidence of adulteration in the courts.

Leicester. F. C. BULLOCK,

(City Analyst.)

We are grateful to Mr. Bullock for pointing out the slip occasioned by over-condensation, and apologise to the public analysts and sampling officers thus unintentionally slighted.

SOUTH AFRICAN WAR FUNDS Information Wanted

THE British Legion has been asked to inquire into the position of existing funds raised for the benefit of veterans of the South African war, and their dependants.

It is understood that a number of separate funds were raised in certain localities by mayors of cities and towns or other officials, and it is felt that certain balances of these funds may still exist to-day. May I be permitted to appeal, through the medium of LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE, to the trustees or officials connected with any of these funds, where a balance still remains, to communicate information thereon to the undersigned as soon as possible.

Cardigan House, L. J. BIRRELL,
Richmond, Surrey. Secretary, Benevolent
Department, British Legion.

MOTOR VEHICLE LICENCES

1921 Specimen Wanted

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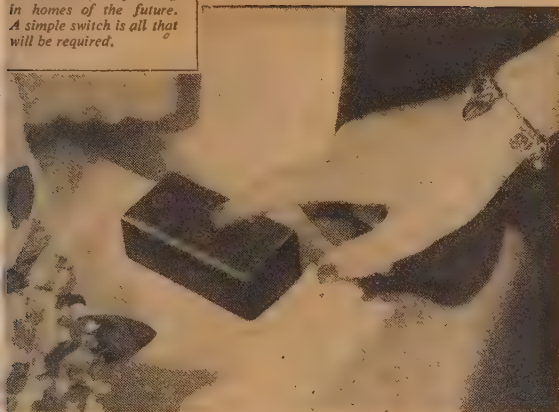
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Welcome Home

ONE of London's most inspiring sights before, during, and since the Victory celebrations has been the daily passage over the capital of squadrons of low-flying Lancasters and Fortresses carrying, not bombs for the enemy, but prisoners returning home. Nearly all the several hundred NALGO members who have been imprisoned in Europe must now be back, and I am sure every one found a warm welcome.

I was specially glad to see again NORMAN ROGERS, of Croydon, who called at Headquarters within four days of his arrival, after three years in prison camps in Italy and Germany. From 1937 to 1941 Rogers was the liveliest among our many live-wire branch public relations officers and magazine editors, and many will remember his vigorous speeches at Conference meetings, his provocative articles in this journal, and the high standard of branch journalism he set with "Calling Croydon"—a standard well maintained by his successors in the editorship. I found his enthusiasm for NALGO and public relations reinforced rather than weakened by his experiences: indeed, he spent much of his time as a prisoner organising lectures and discussions on local government in his camp. We should hear much of him in the days to come.

Life Saved by NALGO Diary!

INCIDENTALLY, Rogers may well owe his life to NALGO, for when a shell hit his tank in North Africa, the most dangerous of the several fragments which hit him, just over the heart, was stopped by the NALGO diary in his breast pocket!

Jobs—but No Homes

WHAT is to be done about the many local government officers who, having accepted an appointment, find they cannot get a home in the town to which they transfer?

Some local authorities, I believe, have either bought houses for their officers, or reserved a number for them on council estates, and the practice may have to be extended. One branch, thinking of approaching its council to suggest similar action, wants to know what has been done elsewhere, but I have no definite information. If members know of any way in which the difficulty has been overcome and will tell me, I shall be glad to publish the information, which will be helpful to others.

Cri de Coeur

AS one who has, on occasion, tried to find a hotel; accommodation for members in London, my sympathies go to the branch secretary in a seaside town who begs me gently to point out that he is not an agent for local hotels and boarding houses. Every post nowadays, he says, brings him a flow of letters from NALGO members asking him to find holiday rooms—some even specifying the position and price. In normal times, secretaries of branches in the resorts have been glad to help their colleagues in this way, but today it is impossible, and the flood of requests puts a heavy burden on honorary officers who have plenty of other work to do. Most holiday towns have publicity departments which will help as far as they can, and it is unfair on branch secretaries, however willing, to expect them to go hunting for "digs."

Exhibition Booming

THE NALGO exhibition continues to draw big crowds wherever it goes. Last month it was seen at Bristol, Dundee, Beddington and Wallington, Wallasey, Woolwich, Lambeth, Bexley Heath, Matlock, Southgate, and in the Scottish Eastern Border Counties. This month it is in Coventry, Manchester, Yarmouth, Willenhall, Kilmarnock, Bromley, Blackpool (for Conference delegates), Haslingden, Malden and Coombe, New Orlerton, and Hamilton. Most of these have supplemented it, or are planning to do so—some of them on a big scale—with local material and are drawing an interesting crowd with films, competitions, civic weeks, and the like.

Dundee, incorporating the exhibition in "the first real civic week in Scotland," reports "a resounding success," with 30,000 visitors. Every department contributed, many with "live" exhibits—including specimen school classes, demonstrations and experiments by the gas, elec-

tricity, and weights and measures departments, mechanical accounting and recording by the finance department, and a tramcar which visitors could drive themselves. In addition, there were daily lectures by chief officers, films, a most successful brains trust, and a pageant of Dundee. Wallington, ran a "Double or Quits Quiz" with local government questions and a brains trust. Lambeth showed some fascinating pictures



"It's all due to the shortage, you know."

and maps of the borough's rich history and grim wartime experiences. Woolwich had some fine mechanical exhibits of the utility services.

Civil Defence Secrets

In this connection, I should like to see more towns which have suffered enemy raids telling the story of their experiences and the way they met them. During the war, civil defence was shrouded in secrecy. Now the censorship has been lifted, why not lift the local veil as well? Show the control centre map with every "incident" marked—your citizens will be thrilled each to pick out "my bomb"; publish casualty figures and a roll of honour; show photographs of each major incident, together with pictures of the same area today; display the logs of particular incidents, showing the times at which the various services arrived, how long it took to complete the rescue work, to start repairs, and so forth; publish a detailed official account of each raid, giving all the facts which have hitherto been kept dark. The result would be of extraordinary interest and—more important—it would enhance public respect for the civil defence and local government services.

Brains Still On Top

NOT even victory, it seems, can check the rising interest in local government as demonstrated by the popularity of NALGO brains trusts.

The palm goes this month to Doncaster, which, in association with a local newspaper, organised a brains trust with Donald McCulloch, of B.B.C. fame, as question master, five prominent public men in the West Riding as "brains," and Russell Lord, a well-known American journalist, as guest speaker. The mayor gave the meeting a civic opening and an audience of 700 kept the "brains" busy for two hours.

Of particular interest was a question on citizens' advice bureaux. The brains trust unanimously favoured keeping these on after the war, as a local authority service; one member suggested that they should be run by public relations officers appointed by local authorities.

Eastbourne branch has held three brains trusts—a venture for which the "Eastbourne Gazette," in a commendatory leader, predicts "a long and

profitable career"—and Blackpool Branch repeated the success of its first. Many more are planned for the coming months.

Self-Education

IN addition to educating the citizens, local government officers must educate themselves—if, indeed, self-education should not come first. A good example of how to do it is provided by the Stirlingshire branch.

Inspired by the enterprise of Falkirk in starting a local government study group, the branch executive decided to follow suit, and JOHN M. BATEMAN, branch public relations officer, took the job of organising it. He formed a committee of about forty members and during the year arranged 18 weekly meetings, addressed by county clerk, members of the council, and chief officers in turn. Next season the plans to have lectures of general cultural interest

Two Books to Watch For

IN this connection, readers will be interested to hear that George Allen & Unwin Ltd. have decided to expand the "Town and County Handbooks" series, started shortly before the war, and to which L. Hill, then NALGO's general secretary, contributed a volume on "The Local Government Officer." JOHN WARREN, M.A., D.P.H., town clerk of Slough, chairman of the NALGO Reconstruction and Public Relations Committee, and a well-known contributor to this journal, has been appointed new editor of the series, which will be opened with a book of his own, *The English Local Government System*. This, I understand, will be a short but comprehensive account of local government from the administrative angle, providing an ideal "refresher" for the officer returning from the Forces, and an essential background for every officer who wants to know what it is all about. It will be followed by *A Short History of Modern Local Government*, by K. B. Smellie, of the London School of Economics.

Croydon's VE Day

VE-Day was no holiday for members of Croydon Branch, who at short notice organised no fewer than 14 separate concert parties to visit hospitals and institutions in the borough: a fine effort.

Similar public spirit was shown by Peterborough and District branch in April when, aided by several members of the Soken of Peterborough branch, it acted as host at the mayor's Sunday evening concert for troops, entertaining a critical audience for more than two hours. The branch's reformed Drama League gave five sketches, and there were a pianist, two singers, a conjurer and a "moneologist"—in all an impressive array of talent.

A Pioneer of Transport

PUBLIC transport has lost a notable pioneer, and NALGO a good member, by the retirement of JOSEPH LUNN, works engineer at London Transport, and chairman of the London Transport branch. His service life epitomised the history of modern transport. At the beginning of the century he helped to convert South Lancashire from horse to electric trams, and saw electricity replace steam on the Mersey Underground. Coming to London afterwards, he brought the first electric tram to West Ham, where he spent 29 years before going over to London Transport. There he devoted his energies to the conversion of London trams to trolley buses, and last year achieved the proud status of an "Officer of the Board."

51 Years' Service

THREE other retirements of which I have just heard, all tell remarkable records of service. They are J. A. HAIGH, clerk to Featherston U.D.C., with 43 years to his credit, 35 of them as clerk; JOHN LINCOLN, former chief clerk of the engineer's department and since 1939 defence administrative assistant at South Shields, who has achieved the fine total of 51 years in the same authority; and JOHN MACKIE, local taxation officer at South Shields, with a service of 49 years.

Obituary

A. E. Harris and W. Scott

We regret to record the deaths of: A. E. HARRIS, surveyor to Battle R.D.C. and vice-chairman of Battle branch, aged 62; and WILLIAM SCOTT, first secretary of Glasgow branch and a well-known authority on bowls, on whom he wrote in the newspapers under the name "Jack High." He retired from the service 49 years ago.

SALARIES AND SERVICE CONDITIONS

357

NORTH WESTERN AND NORTH WALES
 The Water Board has graded its staffs within the provincial council scales.
 The provincial council has prepared grading schemes for North U. D. and Cockerham and Deudraeth U. D.
 At a meeting of the appeals committee of the provincial council on May 12, the assistant district officer appeared on behalf of six officers of Dalton-in-Furness U. D., who were aggrieved by the failure of the council to adopt a model grading scheme prepared by the provincial council. Five of the appeals were allowed, and one was allowed. The officer concerned in the appeal disavowed his resignation, and the council was recommended to reverse the vacant post on the higher grade claimed.

Merthyr and District Gas Board has decided to make a constituent member of the provincial council.

YORKSHIRE

Threlkirk C.B. has regraded most of its officers.
Threlkirk B. has adopted the provincial council sick pay scale.

Threlkirk C.B. decided, on the report of a special committee of inquiry, to terminate the services of the station master. After representations to the council failed, NALGO helped the officer to submit his resignation to the Ministry of Health. The Minister has refused to approve his dismissal.
Threlkirk C.B. has amended its salary scale for clerks to £55 (at 16)—£110 (at 20).
Threlkirk U.D. has adopted the Bolton scheme of payment of officers on war service, with effect from June 1, 1943.
Threlkirk U.D. has agreed, on representation by its district officer, to disregard colonial allowance in fixing balance of civil pay.

Threlkirk B. has adopted the provincial council scales for clerks.

Threlkirk B. has become a constituent member of the provincial council.

Threlkirk C.B. has re-graded a dental attendant on representation by the district officer.

SOUTHERN

When the Southern District Committee met at Chester on May 12, the Mayor of Winchester presided. The "Sir Homewood Crawford" Shield to J. H. Haley, the chairman. This is the second consecutive year that the Southern district has won this valuable Benevolent and Orphan Fund trophy, its average rating exceeding the previous year's record of 100. By 1s. 2d. per week, and the meeting paid tribute to the work of Mr. Arnold, the B. & O. Fund chairman. Salisbury branch again secured the shield, with an average contribution of £2 6s. per head.
 Twenty-eight local authorities have so far adopted the new cost of living bonus.

SOUTH WESTERN

Launceston B. and Ashburton U.D. have joined the provincial council, bringing membership to 112 authorities, less than two-thirds of the total. A vigorous recruiting campaign is soon to be undertaken by the provincial council.

The provincial council is to prepare grading schemes at the request of four authorities.

Cost of Living One Point Up

The Ministry of Labour cost of living index rose one point last month to 203, representing an increase of 31 per cent since the outbreak of war.

NALGO Addresses

Headquarters (all departments)—The General Secretary, NALGO, 24, Abingdon Street, London, S.W.1 (Telegram NATASSOC, Parli., London; Telephone Whitehall 9351).
"Local Government Service" advertisements—A. Darby's Advertising Agency, Cobham House, 24, Black Friars Lane, London, E.C.4 (City 6686).

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